

Apples and Trees

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Summary: The final installment of the Apples and Angels trilogy. Ella Emrys, the daughter of Alice Potter, is grieving her twin brother's death. Little does she know that Jacen is still alive, in Numenguard, planning an escape from the Undead trifecta. In a story of rebellion, she seeks to reclaim the Deathly Hallows. But will she be able to face the challenges alone? Or will she need help?

1. Prologue

A raven-haired young woman approached door of her most guarded cell. She lifted the key from her emerald robes that matched her acidic green eyes that glowed, providing light into the darkness. The key clicked in the lock, and the door creaked open. She entered a second room and said a password while waving her wand. The door opened to reveal a figure sitting in the corner in the sun that was not covered in snow that had drifted from the ground-level window nine feet above her head.

The prisoner acknowledged her presence by raising his head. He'd long given up on any hopes of escape over the past year. The farthest he'd made it was the antechamber before the platoon of guards had caught him and tortured him. He also refused to give any respect to the sorceress he hated with every bit of him. Defiance was the only thing on his mind.

"Hello, Morgana," he said coolly. "Tell me, is this another visit to clone me? Or am I getting an actual bed?"

"The first is yes, the second is no," she replied in an equally cool voice. "Tell me, Emrys, do you not tire of the games you play?"

"I'll only 'tire' of it when I'm free," he said angrily.

"You'd do well to remember who is in control here," she warned

him.

"Yeah, but you need me to be unharmed in order for your clone to be healthy. Not that you have that much to work with," he said helpfully.

"I hate that I cannot get to you," she muttered as she drew her wand, clinging to it with iron fingertips. She tapped Emrys with it, and traced a shape in the air, silently creating a clone. The clone then collapsed. Morgana pulled her ring out of her pocket and slipped it onto the clone, causing him to disappear in a blue light.

"I'm guessing that's it," Emrys said as Morgana exited. She never stopped.

He sighed and slowly rose to his feet, causing crackling throughout the bones prominent behind his pale skin. He began to pace the length of the cell, like an animal in a cage. He was one, after all.

Ever since mid-February, he felt the block on his twin bond break free from one end. Despair and rage of the deepest kind and pure depression poured in, all that he could bear. He tried to send something reassuring, only to realize that Ella couldn't feel him.

Frustrated, he dropped back to the ground, punching the wall before realizing it was a really bad idea. He hated this. He hated that it was useless, that he was useless, and that he was going to die in the icy hellhole.

He clenched his fists in attempt to control something for once. Just one small thing. He traced his initials in a heart with his boot next to those of Mara-Jade Evans. He groaned. How could he let it happen? How could this happen to him?

The door opened again, to show a girl with reddish brown hair tied back in a braid, her eyes glowing green like Morgana's.

One of the undead, Emrys realized. He hadn't seen this one before. He knew that maybe, just maybe, he could trick this one.

The girl was bringing in a tray of the food, dressed in shabby clothes that were characteristic of the revenants. She looked almost afraid of him. Emrys looked at her, almost bored. Make her think you're harmless.

"Are you new?"

She nodded before setting down the tray quickly.

"The Dark Lady said that your clones have been turning out weaker than she'd like in the past few months," the revenant explained in the Frankenstein accent of Grindelwald's German, Morgana's Welsh, and Riddle's English. Most of the revenants spoke with it in English or German, often mixed together into the language that Emrys hated.

"Ah," Emrys muttered. "Well tell her thanks for that."

"I. . . Will?" she seemed a little confused. She turned, trying to

hurry out as quickly as possible.

"Are you going to be coming around more often?"

She turned around. Perfect.

"That's what the Dark Lady commanded," she said, as if she were reciting the words.

"I'm guessing that you don't even know my name, or why I'm here," he continued. More, more. Get her curious.

"Shut up! Shut up!" the revenant shouted, stamping her grimy, worn-down boot. "They told me that you'd try to trick me! They all said that you were tricky! I don't want to hear what you have to say!"

Emrys flinched at the shouts. He knew that this one was a lot smarter than he thought. He'd have to rethink tricking this particular revenant.

"Well, you're cleverer than the others," he said. "So, tell me, what's your name?"

"I have none," she said quietly. "The Dark Lady stitched a number on my jacket. That's all I know."

"Can I give you a nickname?" he asked, mostly just out of a little warm feeling in his heart, a warm feeling that Morgana, Grindelwald, and Voldemort hadn't yet chipped away from him.

She hesitated for a moment.

"I suppose."

"Is Red okay with you?" he blurted out, only able to see the reddish tint in her hair for inspiration. She looked slightly relieved.

"Of course it's okay with me," she said, softening towards Emrys.

"Well?"

"Well what?"

"Aren't you going to ask me my name?" Emrys asked. "It's only polite."

"What do you know of politeness?" Red asked. "You're here, aren't you?"

"Rudeness isn't exactly what got me here, it was more like rebellion," he shot back.

"Well, fine then, if you're so important, what is your name?" Red asked, folding her arms over her chest.

"My name is Jacen Emrys, and I'm here because I was the last master of the Resurrection Stone."

2. Sunrise Twin

The summer air drifted through the open window I stared out of as the sun rose. All I could think of was how Jacen would've loved this sunrise. I shrank away from the sun's warmth as the sinking feeling in my stomach returned. I didn't deserve to feel it. Yet the only reason I'd gotten sunburned at all this summer was because of I sat in front of the window facing east every day. I'd only stepped outside a few times because my presence was requested by Bello, not for any reason of my own.

My bangs were now starting to get in my eyes and my dark wavy hair was unkempt from barely brushing it at Aunt Ginny's insistence. I refused to leave the house, and I refused to leave Bello home alone with the rest of the Potters.

Letters piled on the desk, gathering dust. Owls kept bringing more, but I could never find the energy to lift the quill to the parchment. Besides, even if I did, what was there left to say? Really. What else could I say?

The last two years of my life had changed everything. I was a child sent off to war for my special talents. My brother was captured by the three villains returned from the dead, and returned under the control of Gellert Grindelwald. My mother had gone into a coma. One of my other best friends got captured. Another got burned by her own special fire. Yet another was dead now. My father was arrested for possibly influencing my brother to go dark (they never knew the truth). Now Jacen was dead, and it was all my fault.

Because I was the one who killed him.

"Ella? Can you please come down here?"

I sighed and reluctantly, slowly rose to my feet to come to my grandmother.

"Now!"

"I'm coming!" Still, for good measure, I ran down the steps, only to stumble and fall off of the last step. I ignored the pain and sprang to my feet, running to see the family gathered in the living room, including my three cousins and my two-year-old brother, Bello.

"We're going out to a brunch in Diagon Alley," Grandmother Lily explained. "You never go out with us much, so it's mandatory."

I stared blankly at her, trying to make sense of the words in the fog that clouded my brain. Lily, my cousin, walked up to me, and glanced back at Grandmother Lily.

"I'll get her ready," she promised, then escorting me upstairs. I took a shower, shaved my legs, did everything they wanted me to do. Lily even helped me brush out my unkempt hair. I dressed in the blue dress that belonged to Lily before she shot up an inch in June, and the sandals that belonged to Aunt Ginny.

I pretended that I was fine as I followed them into the Floo. I

pretended I was fine as I sat through the brunch blankly. I pretended that I wasn't still hurting so bad for what I couldn't have. What I'd destroyed.

That's what it came down to, wasn't it? I destroyed everything. Everyone that I was close to was in stitches or worse. Dead, injured, imprisoned, or in despair. Or more.

I'm a curse, I thought as my two-year-old brother smiled at me. I'm a curse to everyone around me. I wish he wouldn't love me. I'll just end up hurting him, won't I? One way, or another.

I rubbed my arms and kept my head down as we exited the restaurant.

"Ella!"

My head shot up. I hadn't talked to him since summer began.

"Gavin!"

I ignored anyone from my family, and walked over to him and hugged.

"Kieran, Rowan, and I, we were getting worried about you," Gavin said. "You haven't written. What's been going on?"

"I just haven't had the energy," I said quietly.

"I understand," he said. "I miss Tip and Jacen and Mara-Jade, too. But still, you need help. I wish I didn't have to say this here and now, but I don't know if I'll see you again until September. Talk to someone, please. I'm asking as one of your best friends."

"I will," I said, if only trying to make my friends happy. "Or at least, I'll try."

"Thank you," Gavin said. "It was nice seeing you. I think your aunt wants you."

I turned to see an angry and impatient Aunt Ginny and reluctantly trudged towards her. I knew what was next, thought. A visit to St. Mungo's. The waiting room and white walls filled with portraits always made me a little excited. I'd be able to see Mum.

God, I missed her. I wished she'd wake up and figure out how to help me get everyone out of this mess. More urgently, though, I just wanted her and Daddy to be here.

I held her hand when I went in, and began telling her about my day.

"And I saw a sunrise that Jacen would love," I said, almost drifting off. "You remember that, don't you? How he loved getting up early to see all the colors? How you said we were crazy for getting up while it was still dark in the first place? How you can't function before noon without a cup of coffee?"

I smiled, then looked down to my mother's graying hair, transfigured

purple. What would she think of me if she knew what had happened?
What I'd done?

"I love you."

3. God I Want to Dream Again

Oh great. More attention, just what I wanted.

While Red was an interesting change in the endless days that had passed, I didn't like what it meant. The triumvirate was paying more attention to me than they should've. Granted, seeing as they were making a little clone army of me, maybe they should've been paying more attention in the first place.

But I hated always being under the thumb of the three of them. Sure, the physical torture and interrogations had stopped after a period of time. But they took every opportunity to remind me that they were the ones in control. I had no escape, no way out. I couldn't even jump into Ella's head, like I could before.

"God, I want to scream," I muttered, just to hear my own voice ring out. "I wonder if that would bring someone in. Heh."

I knew I could use this to my advantage. Maybe if I continued gaining Red's trust, maybe I could steal her wand-if she had one. I knew some did. But some didn't, I found that out the hard way one time when I tried it. If I got my hands on a wand or something, maybe I'd be-No, I'd definitely be out of here quicker than you could say Rabby-Babibity.

I'd shadow-travel, except I tried that and it didn't work. I wish it had, but Voldemort had that controlled. Morgana had even cut off the Fairy Queen's gifts. I leapt to my feet and began to pace. It was something to do with my frustration. Better than hitting the wall. I examined some of the scrapes on my knuckles from that.

I remembered when I cut Ella off, the twin bond off, to protect her. I thought I'd be able to turn it back on, but all it did was give me her emotions, not even her thoughts. God, I didn't want to be alone anymore!

Why did she feel the despair? The anger? The self-hatred?

Ella never truly hated herself. Why would she feel it?

I-

I just want to know the truth. Wait-

That's not entirely true. What I want, more than anything? It whispers to me when I sleep, it's the light dangled over my head that I can't reach no matter how high I jump.

My freedom.

End
file.